Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Office

Accountability Report 2002-2003

The **Review Office** provides independent oversight over the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*** and ***Part XX of the Municipal Government Act.*** The Review Officer is appointed by Order-in-Council for a term of from five to seven years. The Office reviews decisions of public bodies related to applications for access to records held by public bodies, local public bodies, and municipalities made in accordance with the *Acts*.

The following is a list of the Office's priorities and results for the year April, 2002 to March 2003.

PRIORITY

Increase efforts to educate the public on its rights in accordance with the FOIPOP Act.

RESULTS

- Improved the Review Office's website by:
  - providing answers to frequently asked questions;
  - providing copies of the Review Officer's Reports in a timely fashion to all public and local public bodies' FOIPOP Administrators; to journalists; to the government library; and to other interested parties. Our website invites readers to subscribe to this service;
  - directing readers to the Review Officer's Reports on the QuickLaw and Canlii web sites; and
  - providing comment on important access and privacy issues.

- The Review Officer made three separate submissions to the FOIPOP Review Committee, all of which were made public on the committee's website as well as the Review Office website.

- The Review Officer gave television, radio and newspaper interviews to discuss Reviews and/or access and privacy issues.

PRIORITY

Offer training to public bodies.

RESULTS

- The Review Office provided an information session attended by some 60 FOIPOP Administrators from public bodies and local public bodies. (A planned information session for the Annapolis Valley was cancelled because of weather).

- The Office offered one-on-one training for all new FOIPOP Administrators.

PRIORITY

To increase awareness among public bodies of their obligations to ensure the protection of personal privacy.

RESULTS

The Review Officer

- Advised Dalhousie University's School of Library and Information Studies on the meaning of "informed consent" when collecting students' personal information.

- Advised the Nova Scotia Community College on students' rights to the protection of their personal privacy.

- Participated in public discussions about police video surveillance.

Darce Fardy
Review Officer

January, 2004